The Camp Hughes Trenches Self-Guided Tour

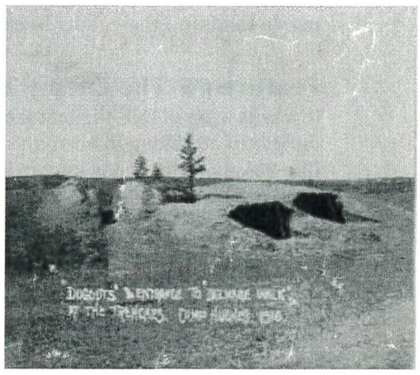
Introduction

The Camp Hughes trench system was developed in 1916 to teach soldiers the lessons of trench warfare which had been learned through great sacrifice on the battlefields of France and Flanders. Veterans were brought back to Canada to instruct in the latest techniques. The trenches accurately replicated the scale and living arrangements for a battalion of 1000 men. They were designed to match the lay of the land and use geography to their advantage. On the Western Front the Germans were known to occupy the "high ground"—with that in mind the Canadian Engineers built the Camp Hughes Trenches. Each network of trenches faces the enemy trench uses geography to conceal their movement.

Feature #1 Headquarters of Main Trench System

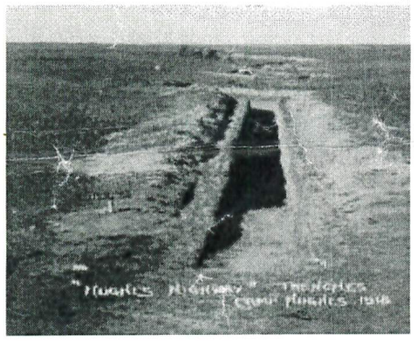
" Dulmage Dugout"

This feature was Battalion Headquarters of the Main Trench Network. (**See start Point**) It was here that the troops entering the trenches would receive their munitions and rations.



Feature #2 The Communication Trenches

There are two main long communication trenches **(known on map as White and Green Trench)** leading up to a line of support and front-line trenches. All along the route dugouts with thick earth overhead cover housed the troops and protected them from artillery fire. A communication trench was designated to move soldiers and supplies to and from the front line to the rear.

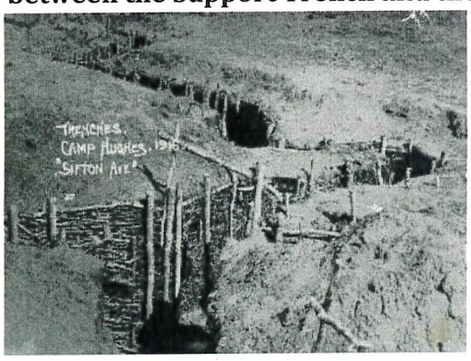


"Hughes Highway" This feature begins (on map known as White Trench) has several diamond like trenches known as island traverses along its route. These were to serve as a reserve trench in the event of a successful assault by the enemy.

Feature #3 "The Covering or Support Trench"

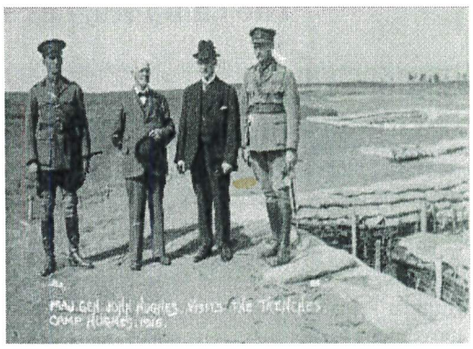
Known as the **"Red Trench"** this trench parallels the front line. It has fire bays to cover or support the front line from attack. At each of these bays is found a dugout that would house the reserve troops and shelter them from enemy artillery and small arms fire. Looking southward one can observe that this trench system is concealed from the enemy.

Feature #4 The Communication Trenches between the Support Trench and the Front Line



These four communication trenches (**known as the Yellow trench on the Map**) between the cover trench and the front-line held many dugouts housing the various company units. They were very narrow and were built for movement of supplies from the front to rear.

Feature #5 The Front-line Trench



This feature known as the **"Blue Trench" on the Map** extended over 1000 metre frontage situated on the reverse slope of a flat area known as no-man's land.

Immediately below this trench one finds a fairly linear trench with dugouts below the fire trench. This was a **"travelling trench"** totally concealed from the enemy designed to move troops safely from end of the trench to the other end.

Once established, the battalion would undergo training in daily routine, sentries, listening posts, trench clearing, and finally, a frontal assault on the "enemy" by going over the top and across no-man's-land into the enemy line of trenches.

Feature #6 The Enemy Trenches As you leave the safety of the Canadian trench you march towards a small hill-like feature crossing "no-man" One cannot help but feel exposed to the possible danger of attacking in no-man's land. The enemy on the Western Front began constructing circular like defensive trenches known as **"stellungs"** occupying redoubt like features as their focal point. **Feature #6** trenches replicate this concept of defence. When you look to the main Canadian Trench system one cannot help but notice how the trenches at Camp Hughes reflected the reality of trench warfare on the Western Front. Most of the Canadian trenches are concealed and movement of their troops are hardly noticeable.

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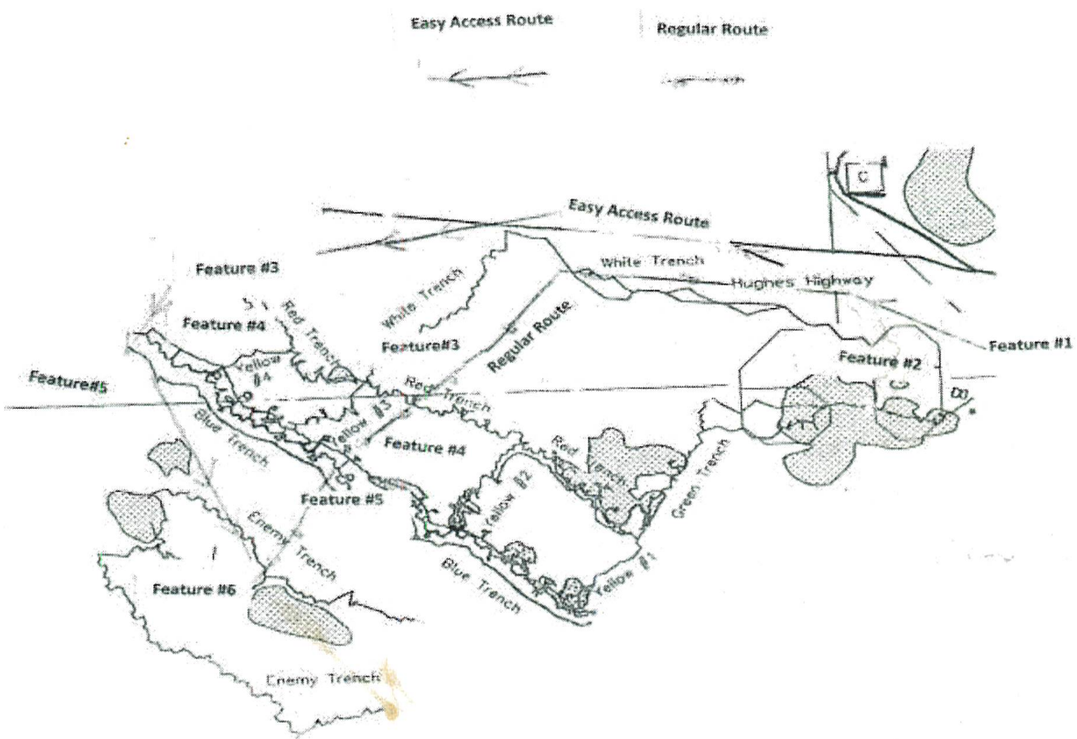
Map of Trench Network

Easy Access Route-- is for those who are bit challenged in walking.
Regular Route-- is for those who are able to climb up and down the trenches.